



State of Connecticut
HOUSE REPUBLICAN OFFICE
STATE CAPITOL
HARTFORD, CONN. 06106

Testimony in Support of House Bill Number 5524
Judiciary Committee
March 7, 2016

Chairmen Tong and Coleman, Ranking Members Rebimbas and Kissel and Members of the Judiciary Committee, I would like to thank the Committee for raising House Bill Number 5524: An Act Increasing Penalties for Dealing Synthetic Drugs.

This bill is an important House Republican proposal to amend the definition of "narcotic substance" in order to add fentanyl and fentanyl derivatives. This important change will increase the penalties for dealing fentanyl substances.

Too many Connecticut families have felt the loss of a loved one due to the climbing death rates associated with opioids. According to the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, drug related deaths are rising every year. Specifically, deaths associated with fentanyl are escalating at alarming rates. On March 18, 2015, the United States Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) issued a nationwide alert about the dangers of fentanyl stating "often laced in heroin, fentanyl and fentanyl analogues produced in illicit clandestine labs are up to 100 times more powerful than morphine and 30-50 times more powerful than heroin." The DEA warns that fentanyl is the most potent opioid available for use in medical treatment and is potentially lethal.

House Bill 5524 would re-classify fentanyl as a narcotic substance. This change in law would increase the penalties associated with dealing fentanyl substances. Increasing penalties for the dealing of fentanyl, a substance that is more powerful than heroin and directly responsible for over 180 Connecticut deaths in 2015, is a necessary and common sense change to battle the devastating opioid issue facing Connecticut.

I urge the Judiciary Committee to pass House Bill Number 5524 to increase penalties for dealing synthetic drugs. Please allow the full General Assembly the opportunity to debate this issue and to pass legislation to help save the lives of individuals suffering with opioid addiction.